



Guardian Angels Central Catholic School Newsletter

# NEWS FROM THE NEST

Graduation 2024 Edition

Page 1

## Graduation 2024



**GACC GRADUATION:** Jayden Ehrisman, left, and Isabel Hass are filled with laughter during a speaker at the GACC graduation May 12.





**Above: GACC's Amber Kreikemeier cracks a smile during Sunday's graduation ceremony. Right: Gavin Kreikemeier gives his mom, Leslie Kreikemeier, a hug as GACC seniors proceed into Sunday's graduation ceremony.**



**Seth Baumert, left, and Nick Daberkow applaud a speech that was given May 12 at GACC's graduation ceremony.**



**Chris Hutchinson gives his senior graduate, Sydney Hutchinson, a hug at GACC's graduation. Pictured to the left is Sydney's mom, Christine Hutchinson.**





**GACC High School Principal Justin Wardyn awards Bryce Bailey with his diploma.**



**Dax Doernemann gives his mom, Lynda Doernemann, a hug at the beginning of GACC's graduation ceremony.**



**Filled with laughter at GACC's 2024 graduation ceremony are, from left, Carter Nebuda, Emerson Ortmeier and Kiley Pojar.**





**Evan Schuetze applauds a speaker, while James Schuetze cracks a smile.**



**GACC graduate Joe Schwer is all smiles after receiving his high school diploma. Pictured behind him are Interim President John Naatz and Principal Justin Wardyn.**

## BIRTHS

Steve '04 & Melissa Hunke, daughter, Lydia Rae, DOB 10/16/23  
 Ashley (Hass) '05 & Trent Petersen, son, Bryer, DOB 1/4/24  
 Kaylie (Franzuebbers) '14 & Austin Weitzenkamp, daughter, Adeline Louise, DOB 3/8/24  
 Morgan (Bracht) '16 & Tyler Weitzenkamp, son, Bodie Thomas, DOB 4/10/24  
 Megan (McAuliffe) '15 & Jacob Cassell, son, Wyatt James, DOB 4/26/24  
 Christy (Fast) '02 & Tim Lens, daughter Avery, DOB 5/13/24  
 Madeline (Knobbe) '17 & Sage Gideon, son, Cal William, DOB 5/20/24  
 Kali (Stratman) '18 & Dalton Smith, son, Kowen Jeffery, DOB 5/24/24  
 Nick '06 & Beth Oligmueller, son, Weston Michael, DOB 6/10/24  
 Emily (Ridder) '09 & Ryan Mascarello, daughter, Zita Therese, DOB 6/16/24  
 Mary (Kreikemeier) '07 & Matt Lueshen, son, Isaac Kevin, DOB 7/1/24  
 Sara (Hunke) '13 & Stephen Havlovec, daughter, Annie Elizabeth, DOB 7/13/24

## DEATHS

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD

Kayleen (Coughlin) Seerley '69  
 Evelyn (Decker) Jorgensen '44, DOD 2/6/24  
 Lorraine (Neesen) Schlautman '56, DOD 5/19/24  
 Elizabeth "Liz" (Schinstock) Bliemeister '44, DOD 5/25/24  
 Nancy (Rief) Grovijohn '63, DOD 6/11/24  
 Carol (Schlautman) McAuliffe '78, DOD 6/14/24  
 Doris Luebbert '71, DOD 7/18/24

## WEDDINGS

Sarah Arduser '16 married Jarret Sindelar on 3/23/24

# Bradley named president of GACC

**By Teresa Hasenkamp**

Guardian Angels Central Catholic is pleased to announce the hiring of Andrew Bradley as president. He began his duties at Guardian Angels Central Catholic on July 1.

"I am tremendously excited for me and my family to join the Guardian Angels

Central Catholic community. During our time in West Point, my wife and I were impressed by the school and its stakeholders. We were warmly welcomed, and we are excited to be a part of The Nest," Bradley said.

More on Bradley will be announced in the near future.







**TOP OF THEIR CLASS:** Sydney Hutchinson, left, was this year's Valedictorian for Guardian Angels Central Catholic, while Helena Steffensmeier was the 2024 Salutatorian.



# GACC's Blue Ribbon Dinner

**By Delores Meister**

It was the celebration of the 40th annual anniversary of the Blue Ribbon Dinner at the Neilsen Community Center Monday evening, March 18.

One hundred sixty patrons enjoyed the four course dinner, speakers and entertainment.

The first dinner was an early fundraiser in 1982 held at Indian Trails Country Club. (The dinner was skipped during two covid years).

Past committee members were recognized and applauded as were patrons who had not missed a yearly dinner.

Witty and humorous Master of ceremonies Shea Stokely 2008 alum entertained (with mortician jokes.)

Stokely introduced his co-2008 alum classmate Chelsea Franzluebbbers Werner.

It was Chelsea Franzluebbbers who helped put Central Catholic women's softball on the map, but she didn't talk about sports.

The Blue Ribbon Dinner speaker told of her GACC education that gave her the foundation to continue to grow spiritually closer to God as she lived her adult life.

The Humphrey, Nebraska wife, mother and speech-pathologist challenged alumni to continue their spirituality growth to grow closer to Jesus.

In Chelsea's own words, she said:

"My education for 12 years at GACC provided me with a strong invitation to pursue my faith and my love of Jesus as an adult.

"The invitation I received from Guardian Angel Central Catholic stuck with me---things like the mission trips to serve others or being in a stadium full of 20,000 teens and all receiving the Eucharist and singing songs and worship at our National Catholic Youth Conference.

"The invitation came in smaller ways like the bonus problems on our math test from Mrs. Rief to learn the prayers from the rosary



**Shea Stokely, left, and Chelsea Franzluebbbers Werner.**

or the many community service projects that were done in our own backyards.

"Out of high school I decided on Lincoln for my undergraduate and Lawrence, Kansas for grad school.

"It was a comfort going to a small Catholic school having familiar faces year after year. We had wonderful examples from our teachers and coaches.

"We were blessed having Father Pat as our senior religion teacher and Father Pat was our Humphrey pastor. Fr. Pat checks in with us

from time to time with "what's new? and how are the kids? and he never forgets to ask me like "How's your prayer life? Are you taking time to listen to Jesus in prayer?"

"Questions like this are important. It makes me want to continue to grow and be comfortable. We are grateful for his spiritual direction and to other priests we've encountered through our marriage

"I've been given the foundation from my parents to choose a path



# Father Gerry celebrates 50 years

**By Delores Meister**

Enthusiasm and joy for the priesthood radiates from Father Gerald Gonderinger as he celebrates his Golden Anniversary as a diocesan priest.

"What I love about the priesthood is being with people in the pivotal moments of their lives. I have really loved working with people. I've been with people in their highest and greatest moments of joy and I've been with people in their deepest moments of

pain and sorrow," the now retired clergy said.

Father Gerrysaid "I grew up with the plan of being a priest. I think I got the idea as a little kid helping the Franciscan Sisters of Saint Kunigunda in their garden across the street from my house. Growing up I liked to play I was a priest."

As a priest he said he has never been bored. He loved everything at Central Catholic specially enjoying teaching four classes a day.

To celebrate this momentous 50-year anniversary Father Gonderinger is making a pilgrimage praying a Mass at each of the parishes in which he has served.

He was in West Point St. Mary's for Masses July 13 and 14, and July 14 at Aloys.

With good health in retirement, Father G continues to assist other area clergy and communities as needed.

"God is good."

## BLUE RIBBON DINNER: GACC grad serves as speaker

**FROM PAGE 6**

of faith and service in the future.

"What I have found over the years since graduating from GCC was to determine my priorities and I'd have to check all this daily.

"When I'm honest with myself God wasn't always sitting at the top of my priorities. I have learned and decided over the years that God doesn't just sit at the top, God is in it all.

"It had to be God, plus my marriage. God, plus my family. God, plus my friends. God, plus my career. My foundation let me accept this invitation as an adult and want to work at it each day.

"I work full time as the speech-language pathologist in Columbus at an elementary school in serving K to 4 and I have a part time job at an outpatient pediatric clinic.

"I serve a diverse caseload serving students with complex communication needs, helping program communication devices so my students can have a voice just like any other kid. I also serve students with speech and language disorders, behavioral disorders, and a high number of students with Autism. I love it.

"I think the mission trips we took in high school helped prepare me to enter into a field of service

specifically serving my students in special education.

I've always loved that saying from Saint Teresa of Avila.

*Christ has no body but yours.*

*No hands no feet on earth but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes with which He looks compassion on his world.*

*Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good.*

*Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world.*

*Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are His body.*

*Christ has no body now but yours.*

I've loved this saying because it reminds me what I strive to do in our day-to-day work and I have found that working in the schools it gives me something to fall back on and think about on the tough days because of course it's not always rainbows and butterflies working in education but it's the work God entrusted me to do and His plan for me.

"It's been fun to find ways to keep growing in my faith and spread that in my new home community in Humphrey we got the chance to make a Christians Encounter Christ weekend at the Norfolk Monastery. Our husbands went up one week and we

followed a few weeks later.

"It helped to find a community that reminded me a lot of West Point to be able to continue my faith journey. We have struck with our prayer groups these last six years which has helped make me accountable and afloat in my faith journey. it's nice to be able to have a group of friends that are on the same path sending their kids to a Catholic school and trying to raise little Saints.

"I am forever thankful for a school system that pushed me to grow academically and spiritually and hey--- speech and softball were some of my favorite memories in there too."

"I am thankful for the wonderful community of people here in West Point that are devoted to continuing to raise our children students with a strong Catholic education.

Keep finding ways to push yourself and each other spiritually through prayer groups, through Christians encounter Christ weekends, through local retreats, regularly receiving the Sacraments and taking time to check in on your daily priority list in prayer.

"I'm proud to be a part of the Guardian Angel Central Catholic alumni. Thank you Blue Ribbon dinner committee for inviting me to join you tonight."



# Skoda has career to be proud of



**Bluejay Jocelynn Skoda sprints to a fourth-place finish in the Class C 400-meter dash.**

It was meet to remember, a season to remember, and a career to remember for Guardian Angels Central Catholic senior Jocelynn Skoda.

After four years of excellence, Skoda put a giant exclamation point on her legacy in the Bluejay track program during the State Track & Field meet May 17-18 at Omaha Burke.

Skoda came to Burke in three events, and the Bluejay senior left Omaha with three state medals.

"I'm just glad I was able to compete at a high level like I did last year," Skoda said.

"I was nervous. I did really well last year, and I was scared I wouldn't be able to compete with myself. But I just kept getting better. I'm proud of myself for that."

Skoda owns school records in all three events she competed in at state: the 200, 400 and triple jump.

"It was very gratifying to have so much success. I had no idea I could come out and do what I've done," Skoda said. "I'm just very proud of myself."

Skoda isn't done either. She signed to compete in the University of Nebraska-Omaha track program.

"I'm super excited. I can't wait to be a part of the UNO team," Skoda said. "The coaches seem excited for me, and I'm really excited to compete at a higher level, and just keep getting better."

## **GACC Bluejays Girls State Qualifiers**

Triple jump: Jocelynn Skoda & Isabel Hass

Discus: Kelsy Steffen

400 dash: Jocelynn Skoda

3200 run: Kennedy Baumert

200 dash: Jocelynn Skoda

300 hurdles: Isabel Hass

## **GACC Bluejays Boys State Qualifiers**

Long jump: Chase Smith

100 dash: Jesse Steffen

200 dash: Jesse Steffen

1600 run: Trevor Steffen



# Saint Anthony's Church at Saint Charles

**By Delores Meister**

The sunshine of a Saturday afternoon spotlighted the red brick St. Anthony's Church on the hillside as it stood out against perfect blue sky with white clouds Saturday afternoon.

"For the beauty of the earth. . ."

From the steeple the bells rang across the Elkhorn River Valley one mile away, and to the west hills and green growing fields all around.

The parking lots encompassing the church were filled for the Saturday afternoon June 22 weekend Mass. Nearby an evergreen tree bordered fence line marked the cemetery with 1867 inscribed on the iron gate.

It was an intensely emotional day.

The church was filled with people for the half hour music prelude before Mass was to begin at 4:30. The choir began singing a continuous medley of carefully selected hymns expressing their thoughts, emotions and prayers of praise and love to God.

The stained glass lower open windows added to the beauty as they let in the summer warmth breezes and music flowed in the bright uplifting church interior.

The renowned choir was singing their hearts out going through the traditional sacred hymns of the past 157 years.

"Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life"

"Gentle Woman, teach us wisdom":

"We are a Pilgrim people, we are the Church of God. . ."

This parish, St. Anthony's at St. Charles Township was the first established in Northeast Nebraska. It was organized by German-

speaking immigrant pioneers from Saint Anthony's parish in Europe.

"One spirit one church . . . a family of believers. . . united in one spirit. . . still burning through the ages, still present in our lives."

Give thanks to the Lord for His love is everlasting. . ."

The 90-year-old lifetime organist led the signature St. Anthony's Choir through several generations of passionate singers. Today the six member choir,---the organist's son, daughter, two granddaughters and two brothers who are her cousins, continue the legacy of unique sacred hymns that sang in their lives.

Mass goers were quietly following the words to the music with their memories and hearts. Even babies and toddlers were quietly enraptured.

As 4:30 Mass time came around parish spokesperson David Ortmeier took the microphone to announce what everyone already knew, "This is the last weekend Mass to be held in St. Anthony's."

Ortmeier told of the parish's beginnings when in the late 1850's and beginning 1860's immigrant German-speaking Catholics from St. Anthony of Padua parish in Europe settled here. Immigrant pioneers waited three months for a horseback riding priest to say Mass for

In 1867 the group built a log church. This was the first Catholic church north of the Platte River in Northeast Nebraska. In 1873 a frame church was built but in 1905 the present red brick building now occupied was built and dedicated with weekend Masses ever since.

The mural above the altar depicts the Immaculate Conception which was pronounced during

this era. The stained glass windows hold long-time donor family names. The statue of St. Anthony holding the Christ Child is on a side altar.

Ortmeier expressed thanks to all parishioners in these past 157 years who shared their talents and labor and life for this parish.

"Today seven generations have called this their parish home and we are gathered here today for a final weekend Mass," Ortmeier said.

Music continued.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for His Love is Everlasting"

Father James Weeder then began the celebration of the Mass.

"Glory to God in the highest..."

"O Santissima"

In keeping with this Sunday's gospel Father Weeder said, "It doesn't end. It continues. Jesus said 'Let us cross to the other side.' Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever."

It was the same message to the pioneers when they had NOTHING except their Faith." Mass continued.

"Blest are they. . ."

"For the beauty of the earth, . . ."

"Let there be peace on earth..."

The great "Amen."

Congregational singing the special patron saint song of thanksgiving: "St. Anthony, we turn to thee..."

The glorious final blessing. . .

The prayer,

"O Good St. Anthony, messenger of mercy, bring the consolation of Divine Mercy into our lives, help us to share the message with others, so that the whole world will come to know that God is good."

"Holy God We praise thy name ....Everlasting is thy reign."



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Attention: Alumni Banquet will be held May 31, 2025

Note: JayFest will be held May 30, 2025



Development Office  
419 E. Decatur St.  
West Point, NE 68788

Non-Profit Rate  
U.S. Postage Paid  
West Point, Nebraska

Permit No. 97



## Guardian Angels Central Catholic

419 E. Decatur & 408 E. Walnut  
West Point, NE 68788

402.372.5326 (High School)  
402.372.5328 (Grade School)

